



## Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Calendar October - 2023

### Month-Long Observances:

**Women's History Month:** October is Women's History Month in Canada, a time to celebrate the women and girls from our past, and our present, who are contributing to a better, more inclusive Canada. In 1992, the Government of Canada designated October as Women's History Month, marking the beginning of an annual celebration of the outstanding achievements of women and girls throughout Canada's history. This year's theme, **Through Her Lens: Celebrating the Diversity of Women**, emphasizes the importance of recognizing the achievements and contributions of women from diverse backgrounds. It focuses on the unique perspectives, experiences, and challenges faced by Indigenous women; women from 2SLGBTQI+ communities; and newcomer, racialized, and migrant women. Let's continue to honor women who don't accept the status quo and fight hard to improve the lives of all women in the country.

**Latin American Heritage Month:** In 2018, the Parliament of Canada proclaimed October Latin American Heritage Month in recognition of the Latin American community's tremendous contribution to Canadian society. Hailing from all 20 Latin American countries, Canadians of Latin American origin make up a large and growing community in Canada. They enrich our national fabric with their diverse and vibrant cultures, cuisine, music, dance and more. Also, members of the Latin American community play an important role in Canada's growth and prosperity, thanks to their entrepreneurial spirit.

**National Disability Employment Awareness Month:** National Disability Employment Awareness Month, held in October, was established to increase awareness of the positive outcomes of hiring persons with disabilities in Canada. This October, employers are encouraged to take part in a nationwide campaign that highlights the positive contributions that employees with disabilities make to Canadian workplaces.

**Canadian Islamic History Month:** Canadian Islamic History Month is an observance held annually in October to recognize and celebrate the rich contributions of Muslim Canadians to the fabric of Canadian society. During this month, Canadians of all backgrounds come together to acknowledge the diverse and vibrant heritage of Muslim Canadians, honoring their cultural, social, economic, and political achievements.

**German Heritage Month:** Canadian German Heritage Month is a celebration held annually in October to honor and recognize the significant contributions of Canadians of German descent to the cultural, social, economic, and political fabric of Canada. This month-long observance provides an opportunity for Canadians to appreciate the rich heritage, traditions, and history that German-Canadians have brought to the country.



## Day Observances:

**October 1st International Day of Older Persons:** The International Day of Older Persons, observed on October 1st, is an initiative by the United Nations to recognize the contributions of older persons to society and raise awareness about the challenges and issues they face. Established in 1990, this day serves as an important platform to promote the dignity, rights, and well-being of older persons globally. The United Nations' International Day of Older Persons emphasizes the importance of ensuring that older individuals can lead dignified, healthy, and fulfilling lives. It focuses on addressing age-related stereotypes and discrimination while highlighting the valuable wisdom and experience that older persons bring to families, communities, and societies.

**October 1st—7th Mental Illness Awareness Week:** Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) is an annual national public education campaign designed to help open the eyes of Canadians to the reality of mental illness. The week was established by the Canadian Psychiatric Association, and is now coordinated by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) in cooperation with all its member organizations and many other supporters across Canada.

**October 2nd International Day of Non-Violence:** The International Day of Non-Violence, observed on October 2nd and established by the UN, commemorates the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, a seminal figure in the global movement for non-violence. Rooted in the philosophy of Ahimsa, or non-violence, this day stands as a testament to Gandhi's enduring legacy. It's not just a celebration of his birth but a recognition of his profound impact on the world. Moreover, this day also pays tribute to other luminaries who championed non-violence, such as the Russian author Leo Tolstoy who inspired many of Gandhi's teachings.

**October 2nd Mehregan (Zoroastrian):** Mehregan, also known as "Mehr Festival," is an ancient Persian festival celebrated in Iran and among Persian communities around the world. The word "Mehregan" means "The Festival of Love," and it is a time for joy, thanksgiving, and appreciation for the autumn harvest. The festival has its roots in Zoroastrianism, one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions. Mehregan is observed on the 196th day of the Iranian calendar year, which usually falls around October 2nd in the Gregorian calendar. It is a day when families and friends come together to celebrate the abundance of nature, express gratitude for the harvest, and seek blessings for the future.

**October 4th St. Francis Day (Christian):** St. Francis Day, also known as the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, is celebrated annually on October 4th. St. Francis of Assisi was an Italian Catholic friar, deacon, and preacher known for his deep love of nature and animals, as well as his devotion to poverty, humility, and compassion. He is the patron saint of animals, ecology, and the environment.



**October 5th World Teachers Day:** World Teachers' Day is held annually on 5 October to celebrate all teachers around the globe. It commemorates the anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which sets benchmarks regarding the rights and responsibilities of teachers, and standards for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employment, and teaching and learning conditions.

**October 9th Thanksgiving:** A chance for people to give thanks for a good harvest and other fortunes in the past year. Early Canadian settlers gave thanks for good harvests by decorating their churches with fruits and vegetables and celebrated dinner with venison and waterfowl.

**October 11th International Day of the Girl Child:** The main aims of the day are to promote girls' empowerment and fulfillment of their human rights, while also highlighting the challenges that girls all over the world face. The celebration of the day also reflects the successful emergences of girls and young women as a distinct cohort in development policy, programming, campaigning, and research.

**October 11th National Coming Out Day:** Each year on Oct. 11, National Coming Out Day continues to promote a safe world for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals to live authentically as themselves, whatever that looks like to each unique person! As we learn more about ourselves and the world around us, our understanding of our identities can change and evolve continuously. Whether you choose to come out once, twice, every other year or not at all, coming out is a lifelong journey unique to each person.

**October 12th Dia de la Hispanidad (Spain)** This date remembers the arrival of Christopher Columbus in America, a day with controversial meanings. Hispanics in the US have mix feelings on the holiday. In most Spanish speaking countries, it is celebrated as a means to celebrated the contributions of various countries Indigenous, Spanish, African and Asian cultures.

**October 15th Rural Women's Day:** International Day of Rural Women, observed on October 15th each year, is a United Nations-designated day that recognizes the vital role of rural women in agriculture, food security, and rural development. Rural women play a significant part in ensuring the sustainability of rural households and communities, improving rural livelihoods, and overall contributing to the well-being of their families and communities.



**October 16th World Food Day:** Since 1979, this worldwide event has sought to increase awareness, understanding and informed year-round action to alleviate hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

**October 17th Black Poetry Day:** Black Poetry Day is celebrated every year on October 17 to honor all the talented African American poets, both past and present.

**October 17th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty:** The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed annually on October 17th. This day was established by the United Nations to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries. The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty aims to recognize the struggle of people living in poverty and to honor their resilience and strength. It also serves as a reminder for governments, organizations, and individuals to work together to address the root causes of poverty and create sustainable solutions.

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**October 20th Sikh Holy Day:** The birth anniversary of Guru Granth Sahib, the central religious scripture of Sikhism, is celebrated by Sikhs as Guru Granth Sahib Ji's Gurburab. In 2023, Guru Granth Sahib Ji's Gurburab, also known as "Guru Nanak Jayanti," will be celebrated on October 29th.

**October 20th International Pronouns Day:** Seeks to make respecting, sharing, and educating about personal pronouns commonplace. Each year it is held on the third Wednesday of October.

**October 20th Durga Puja Day:** This day celebrates the divine creative force of the universe and honors the 10 armed goddess Durga. Wife of Shiva and the destroyer of demons.

**October 23rd Chung Yeung Festival:** Also known as Double Ninth Festival, is a traditional Chinese holiday celebrated on the ninth day of the ninth month in the Chinese calendar. Chung Yeung Festival holds special significance in Chinese culture as it is believed to bring good fortune and ward off bad luck. The number nine is considered lucky in Chinese culture, and the ninth day of the ninth month is particularly auspicious.





**October 24th Dasara, Dussehra, or Vijayadashami:** Dasara, also known as Vijayadashami, is a major Hindu festival celebrated in India and other parts of South Asia.

**October 24th United Nations Day:** United Nations Day, observed annually on October 24th, celebrates the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. It highlights the organization's efforts in promoting peace, cooperation, and international understanding among nations. United Nations Day raises awareness about global issues and encourages people worldwide to work together for a more peaceful and sustainable future.

**October 26th Intersex Awareness Day:** Intersex Awareness Day, observed on October 26th, is a significant occasion dedicated to increasing understanding and acceptance of intersex people. Intersex individuals are born with natural variations in sex characteristics that do not align with typical definitions of male or female. This day serves as a platform to challenge societal prejudices and advocate for the rights and dignity of intersex individuals. It aims to raise awareness about the unique challenges they face, promoting respectful and inclusive dialogue surrounding gender diversity.

**October 31st Halloween:** Halloween, observed on October 31st, is a holiday with deep historical roots and diverse cultural origins. Its ancient beginnings can be traced to the Celtic festival of Samhain, marking the end of the harvest season and believed to be a time when the boundary between the living and the spirit world blurred. With the passage of time and the influence of Christianity, Samhain melded with All Saints' Day, giving rise to the Halloween we know today. Over the centuries, Halloween has evolved, blending ancient rituals with modern customs. One of the most iconic traditions is the practice of dressing in costumes, a nod to the ancient belief that disguises could ward off malevolent spirits. Another popular custom is trick-or-treating, which likely finds its origins in the medieval practice of "souling." In modern times, Halloween has become a vibrant celebration, featuring an array of activities such as costume parties, haunted house visits, and pumpkin carving.